



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Lori Pelletier, Secretary-Treasurer Connecticut AFL-CIO

Before the Planning and Development Committee

February 23, 2009

Senator Coleman and Representative Sharkey and members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Lori Pelletier and I serve as Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO. I am here to testify on behalf of our 900 affiliated local unions, who represent working men and women from all 169 cities and towns in our state.

We are opposed to the following bills:

Proposed S.B. No. 394 AN ACT CONCERNING STATE MANDATE RELIEF.

Proposed H.B. No. 5529 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FUNDING OF MANDATES ON TOWNS.

Proposed H.B. No. 5537 AN ACT CONCERNING APPROVAL OF UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES.

Proposed H.B. No. 5550 AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A STATUTORY CAP ON UNFUNDED MANDATES.

Proposed H.B. No. 5558 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OF STATE MANDATES.

Proposed H.B. No. 5565 AN ACT CONCERNING UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES FOR MUNICIPALITIES.

Proposed H.B. No. 5869 AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES.

H.B. No. 6388 AN ACT PROVIDING MANDATE RELIEF TO MUNICIPALITIES.

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These so-called unfunded mandates are important to our local communities. The problem isn't in the mandate, but in our over reliance on the property tax as the work horse tax for cities and towns. State mandates deal with educating our children, protecting our health, and responsible citizenship, all of which are quality of life issues. State government has a responsibility to protect us, and sometimes this needs to be mandated, and technically, cities and towns are mandates of the State.

We are especially offended by the suggestion that our current budget situation is because public employees have the right to collectively bargain. Public employees provide a valuable service to all of us and to suggest that they be treated like second class citizens is unacceptable. Suspending/elimination/blaming the binding arbitration process is not the answer. Public employees are at the table but all parties must join them, only then will we be able to solve this current crisis and put Connecticut families first.

I want to thank the committee for holding this public hearing and if you have any questions I'd be happy to address them.

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